

ASCENSION CATHOLIC CHURCH  
Mill and Division Streets  
Jeannette  
Westmoreland County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6092

HABS  
PA  
65-JEAN,  
51-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
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Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO:  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### ASCENSION CATHOLIC CHURCH

HABS No. PA-6092

- LOCATION: Mill & Division streets, Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania
- SIGNIFICANCE: A high concentration of window, tableware, bottle and specialty glass plants distinguished Jeannette as "The Glass City" early in its history. Significant housing stock consists of company-built row and detached double houses, and several privately constructed dwellings.

#### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This Italian parish was formed beginning in 1914 with the help of a priest from Jeannette's earlier Sacred Heart Church. Mass was held in a vacant storeroom near Sixth Street and Cassatt Avenue until the first part of the present church had been constructed. When completed in 1917, the church quickly became a center for the Italian community on the south side of Jeannette. The church eventually purchased nine of the surrounding double houses and broke ground for an addition in 1960, which was completed in 1961. The addition, while very sensitive to the original building, effectively doubled the size of the church. The full basement under both wings is used as the church education center.

One of the double houses adjacent to the church, originally one of those built by H. Sellers McKee, was used as a parish house. A new parish house was begun in 1965 and completed the following year. Ascension Church also purchased a social hall, the Americanization Society Hall located behind the church across South Sixth Street, in the early 1960s and used the building as an activity center for a short time. A new church social hall, Mersinger Hall, was completed in 1976.

#### PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The original six-bay, central entry plan church along Division Avenue is now part of a larger church building that includes an additional wing and a corner bell tower. A corbel table is a late Romanesque Revival touch that has been repeated on the newer portion of the church. The style of the bell tower above the original entry, with its brick roman arches subdivided into two openings separated by a free-standing column, is likewise repeated on the newer corner tower. Both wings serve as seating areas for the parish and

face a corner altar. The church property also includes an adjacent rectory and a meeting hall along Division Avenue.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Insurance Maps of Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.* New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1916, 1925.

Deed Books. Recorder of Deeds, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, (original church building only), 181/525, 182/15, 566/28, 566/30.

Tax Assessment Books. Westmoreland County Tax Assessment Office, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

“Ascension Church Dedication Booklet, May 11, 1961.” Jeannette, PA: Ascension Church, 1961.

“Ascension’s Golden Era 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book, May 22, 1966.” Jeannette, PA: Ascension Church, 1966.

### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America’s Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HABS and HAER undertook a comprehensive documentation of Jeannette, documenting industries, housing and cultural institutions.